Globalization and Power Strategies: A Look at the US-China Trade War

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Abstract
This paper aims to explain why the current US-China trade war has emerged, by highlighting the key ideas of their power strategies in this new era of globalization, while using power transition theory’s key independent variables, as stigmatized by its author, Abramo Fimo Kenneth Organski. Of course, in this new era of globalization, the era of great transformations and complex, United States and China seem to be developing two opposing visions of power strategies, the first in the sense of conservation and the second in affirmation’s sense. The exponential rise of one almost frightens another, at the risk of losing relatively, totally or quasi-totally its position, prestige, honor, legitimacy and advantages in the international arena. This is what makes their engagements to each other develop several facets at the same time: "soft", "hard", "smart", "special soft" or "special hard". At the same time, this makes possible ideas of cooperation, competition, conflict and war between them. Hence the emergence of the current US-China trade war, defined as a clash’s product of the combination of American’s conservatism with the affirmation, rise of China, which began at the beginning of the year 2018 which, under pretext of the trade deficit dating back to the 1980s, United States now wants to settle all these accounts with China.

Keywords: Globalization, Power Strategies, Trade War, Power Transition.

Introduction
On the basis of the observation made, it should be stressed here that today, with the increasing inclusion, mobility and interdependence between societies, states, individuals, capital and goods at the level of the international system, that no actor and component of the latter can live in a vacuum1. Of course, with the new deals of globalization, better, its unprecedented acceleration, the world is becoming more and more a global village, with the increasingly growing ideas of deterritorialization and global governance2; and therefore, complex3. And this complexity of the world caused by this phenomenon of globalization calls on all states, better still, all global actors in their engagements to the rest of the world, to be competitive for their survival in order to benefit from the new opportunities offered by this phenomenon, but also to bear any shocks in terms of crises that may cause their collapse. From this, we can underline here that globalization appears today as the main force for transforming international relations or rather global geopolitics4. It provides the context for understanding the increase in investment in different parts of the world from many countries, as well as the specific challenges faced by global actors in shaping their development strategies5. It is accelerating, determining all public policies in both: Northern and Southern states, and making and undoing the maps of the world’s powers, and of the world’s gravitation’s center in diver’s social fields namely: Politics, economies, cultures, technologies, etc.

It’s in this context that we can understand the ideas of the thematic confrontation of globalization between two Americas’ thoughts that have marked our era. Francis Fukuyama, wrote an article in 1989 on "The End of History"6 in The National Interest magazine, in which he described a post-Hegelian view of the world, the end of history being the end of the struggle of ideologies, the triumph of the market. The victory


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of market ideology and the end of confrontations between the powers would have established the new market game under a benevolent American hegemony. But very quickly, this vision is contradicted and criticized by another American political scientist, Samuel Huntington, who published an article entitled "The clash of civilizations?" in 1993, in which he tries to theorize the return of history on the basis of civilizations and cultures, explaining that there are six great civilization eras in the world. Huntington believes that globalization and multilateralism will be a failure and that the world can only organize itself into vast regional poles with zones of fronts and confrontations between these different eras of civilizations: the transatlantic world, the Orthodox Slavic world, Islam, Asia, Africa, Latin America.

Although one day we could still talk about the end of history, for the moment, history continues and with a powerful acceleration of events following the complexity of the world made possible by this phenomenon of globalization. But, however, as we can see, in today's world, globalization is seen by some as an opportunity and as one of the effective means of enrichment, by others as a threat and a means of impoverishment. But economic science research strongly supports the optimistic view, showing that globalization has positive effects on growth and prosperity and reduces poverty. The possible negative effects on the distribution of wealth within countries and on the environment are less the result of globalization than of state failures (poor governance, misunderstanding, neglect, selfishness and natural disparity...).

Nowadays, while referring to the typology of powers as stigmatized by Joseph Nye, we can present here Globalization under five (5) facets of engagements, namely: Hard (coercive engagement), hence, the expression "Hard engagement"; Soft (cooperative engagement), hence, the expression "Soft engagement"; Smart (combination of Hard and Soft engagements), hence, the expression "Smart engagement"; "Special Hard" (coercive engagement with a very restrictive dose of cooperation), hence, the expression "Special Hard engagement" and "Special Soft" (cooperative engagement with a very limited dose of coercive engagement), hence, the expression "Special Soft engagement".

Indeed, understanding these different facets of engagements makes it possible to understand better the power strategies in the global debate, as well as the global context in which we are living, and to project the future world. And so, they (these different facets of engagements) allow us to understand the order, disorder, re-order and power strategies of different global actors in the international arena.

As a result, each state, like any other global actor, in its engagements with the rest of the world, adapts its policies and strategies in line with these different facets of engagements identified above for its survival and best positioning on the international arena. Hence, the United States and China, like any other state, in their relations, develop their power strategies, that they adapt to these different facets of engagements mentioned above, to ensure their survival and best positioning on the international arena. This creates at the same time the situations for cooperation, competition, conflict and war between them in their relations.

China, once quasi-enclosed in itself, through its openness to the rest of the world, its ostensible entry into globalization’s games, today it is ranked among the top beneficiaries of the current era of

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globalization through its exponential economic growth that can be observed during the first four decades of our era. China's rise has become a reality, and shocks and shakes others for their best positioning on the international arena, as it happens to the United States. It (China's rise) can be seen year by year, semester by semester, quarter by quarter, month by month, week by week, and day by day. As we can see once again, to date, China has become one of the strong advocates of globalization, and by surprise or not surprising to others, yesterday's strong advocates have become fierce offenders against the current era of globalization, seeking to “de-globalize”, to “re-globalize” or isolationism, as it happens to the United States. Hence, the essence of the current trade war at its initiative, seeking to contain China's rise, for fear of being equal and overtaken to—by it (China), to pass and suffer to the effects of power transition’s moment, and lose its initial positioning on the international arena. And why is that? Is this new era of globalization no longer beneficial to the United States? Is globalization a power’s strategy? If globalization was the best way forward for global prosperity? In the twenty-first century, is economic growth not inevitably linked to globalization? But why trade wars? Why are they initiated by the United States? And why against China? Is the trade deficit not the main reason for this war? Doesn't the decline and power transition’s moment become paranoid for the United States? Is there a trilogy’s relational between this new era of globalization, the US-China trade war and China’s rise? What if the world would be de-globalized, and to be re-globalized? Is it possible? All these sensitive issues, which are, nowadays, divided the opinions and analyses of the various researchers in the world, increasingly demonstrate the importance and attractive strength of the fascinating ideas of globalization, its complexity as an accepted and acceptable global phenomenon, and its repercussions on the positioning of global actors, states on the international arena.

From the above, our concern in this paper is to explain why the current US-China trade war has emerged, focusing on the key ideas of their power strategies in this new era of globalization, while examining the various key independent variables provided by the power transition theory, as stigmatized by its author, Abramo Fimo Kenneth Organski.

From this, apart from this present introduction and the conclusion that will follow, this paper contains four main points that are discussed in succession. The first focuses on a brief overview of the current US-China trade war. The second is entitled globalization and American conservatism. The third, on the other hand, is entitled globalization and Chinese’s affirmation. And the fourth and last is entitled US-China Trade War: the United States and China in the power transition’s trap.

1. A brief overview of US-China trade war

A trade war is "like the game of ping pong, except that balls are dollars and rackets are folders". Here, the United States and China are sending tariffs and some trade restrictions on each other. At this point, we want to briefly outline the data, facts and dates (see Appendix, Key Dates of the trade war) that give the brief quintessence of the current US-China trade war.

As a bonus, it seems crucial to us to point out here that in 2018, China's gross value of imports and exports reached $4.62 trillion. Among these, the import value exceeded $2 trillion for the first time and the export value approached $2.5 trillion, as shown in the graph below.

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Moreover, in the year 2018, the bilateral trade in goods between China and the United States reached $633.52 billion\(^{21}\), 252 times\(^{22}\) as much as that at the time of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1979\(^{23}\) and more than 7.5 times as much as that at the time of China’s accession to the World trade organization in 2001\(^{24}\). Also, Sino-US bilateral trade in services in 2018 reached US$125.3 billion\(^{25}\). And, the total bilateral trade volume between China and the United States in 2018 is 633.5+125.3=758.8 billion US dollars\(^{26}\). From this effect, China and the United States are each other's largest trading partners\(^{27}\).

Again, in 2018, China’s exports to the United States reached 478.4 billion dollars, an increase of 11.3%\(^{28}\). The imports from the US reached 155.1 billion dollars, an increase of 0.7%\(^{29}\). The trade surplus with the United States was 323.3 billion dollars, an increase of 17.2%\(^{30}\). China's exports to the United States accounted for 19% of China's exports in 2018\(^{31}\). As we can see, the United States is China's largest export market and second largest trading partner\(^{32}\). And China is the largest trading partner and the third largest export market in the United States\(^{33}\).

\(\text{Image source}: \) Graphics designed by us based on our research data.


\(^{29}\) News Metal.Com, “The total volume of foreign trade imports and exports exceeded 30 trillion in 2018, the trade surplus was the lowest since 2013”, Op.cit.

\(^{30}\) News Metal.Com, “The total volume of foreign trade imports and exports exceeded 30 trillion in 2018, the trade surplus was the lowest since 2013”, Idem.

\(^{31}\) Jonathan Woetzel and Jeongmin Seong, “For all the hubbub about the US-China trade war, trade is a fraction of China’s economy”, in https://qz.com/1601598/china-cares-more-about-domestic-consumption-than-us-china-trade-war/ May 6, 2019, accessed the 12\(^{th}\) October 2019.


\(^{33}\) Wayne M. Morrison, China-U.S. Trade Issues, Idem.
A comparison of trade surplus and deficit between China and the United States (in the year 2018) and the history of the US’s trade deficit with China 1985-2018. (See the graphs below).

China’s trade surplus with the United States accounts for 65% \(^{34}\) of the total external surplus and the U.S. trade deficit with China accounts for 46% of the total external deficit\(^ {35}\).

**Figure 2. Trade surplus and deficit between China and the United States in 2018**

![Graph showing China's trade surplus and deficit with the United States and the rest of the world compared to the US's trade deficit and deficit with China and the rest of the world.](image-source: Graphics designed by us based on our research data.)

**Figure 3. History US’s trade deficit with China 1985-2018**


On August 14\(^{th}\), 2017, the United States launched a "301" investigation on China\(^ {36}\). As early as March 2018, the United States used its leverage against China by announcing a 25% tax on steel imports and 10% on aluminum\(^ {37}\), which covers 200 billion dollars goods imported from China\(^ {38}\), with a total estimated value of 60 billion\(^ {39}\) US dollars, and restrict Chinese enterprises’ investment and merger in the United States\(^ {40}\).

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Why only more taxes on steel products? Because China is the world's largest steel exporter\textsuperscript{42}. In the meantime, the United States adds that 1,300 Chinese products will be taxed, threatening to impose another 25\% tariff on the remaining 325 billion dollars of Chinese goods\textsuperscript{42}. And so, it is a lever for the outbreak of the US-China trade war.

In response, China unveils a list of 128 American products taxed back\textsuperscript{43}. Eight of them (25\% recycled aluminum, pork products, etc.), while American wine, apples, berries and almonds take 15\% in sight\textsuperscript{44}. And this is only the beginning. Taxes. Counter-taxes. Taxes. Counter-taxes... At the end of August, the United States imposes a 25\% increase in customs duties on a total of more than 250 billion dollars’ worth of imported Chinese goods\textsuperscript{45}. China, for its part, surcharges more than 5,400 American products, to the tune of 110 billion dollars\textsuperscript{36}. And so, China imposed a 10\%-25\% tariff on 60 billion dollars goods imported form the US\textsuperscript{47}.

The leaders of China and the United States agreed to resume negotiations (June 29\textsuperscript{th}, 2019)\textsuperscript{48}. The United States announced that it would no longer impose new tariffs. American companies could supply equipment to Huawei\textsuperscript{49}. The United States loosened visas for Chinese students\textsuperscript{50}. China purchased American goods\textsuperscript{51}. The economic and trade teams of the two countries would discuss specific issues\textsuperscript{52}. At the end of July, the two countries held the 12\textsuperscript{th} round of negotiations in Shanghai\textsuperscript{53}.

The Sino-US trade war resurfaced (from August 2019)\textsuperscript{54}. The United States has renewed its tariffs (August 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2019)\textsuperscript{55}. When they announce that Chinese imports previously saved will in turn be taxed at 10\% tariff on 300 billion yuan of Chinese goods\textsuperscript{56} from September 1\textsuperscript{st}, on August 6\textsuperscript{th}, 2019, the RMB’s exchange rate to US dollar broke 7.57 (see Appendix, Key Dates of the trade war). From that, the US Treasury declared that China made a "currency manipulator\textsuperscript{58}". And at the end, China goes up to the net and simply decides to stop importing (at least temporarily) American agricultural products\textsuperscript{59}. The loss of revenue...
is immense for the United States. Between July 19th and August 2nd, China bought 130,000 tons of soybeans, 120,000 tons of sorghum, 60,000 tons of wheat, 40,000 tons of pork and 25,000 tons of cotton60.

As a result, American companies importing Chinese goods are suffering61. In January, about 50 American industrial lobbies sent a letter to the Trump administration urging it to end punitive tariffs on steel and aluminum imports that affect their activities62. American pork producers, who were exporting their meat to China, also lost at least $1 billion as a result of the trade war63. US soybean exports fell by 77% between July 2018 and May64. To support these farmers, who are at the heart of his electorate, the American president promised to pay them $28 billion in aid65. And if this trade war is causing huge negative impacts on American society, why then continue with this logic? Is it in the American’s national interest? And why then?

According to a study by the University of California66, this war would cost American consumers $69 billion a year, or an average of $213 per person. Supposed to protect American industry and its jobs, the Trump Administration’s strategy also threatens the activity of small entrepreneur’s dependent on a Chinese raw material, explains Pri.org67. According to Reuters68, this White House tactic against China will create 2,000 jobs in the steel sector alone. But American industries protected by tariffs are not protected indefinitely. And for a good reason: Indonesian or Vietnamese companies, capable of producing at low cost, would well see themselves taking over from China. But why is that? What has China done wrong?

For a de-escalation of this war? Friday, October 11th, 2019, American President Donald Trump, just before the Wall Street closure, called a press conference to inform about the progress of trade negotiations with China. "We have reached substantial agreement on Phase one69," said the President of the United States after his meeting with Chinese Vice President Liu He. The Chinese chief negotiator described the discussions as "very good70". It follows in these negotiations that customs duties, which were supposed to rise from 25% to 30% for 250 billion dollars (226 billion euros) of imports on Tuesday, October 15th, will not rise71. On the other hand, nothing was said about the expected increases in December72. US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said that "the President has not made his decision73". Nor was anything said about the removal of the rights that the two countries have imposed on each other over the past eighteen months74. The text of the "phase 1" agreement was not written either75. It would be signed within five weeks by US President Donald Trump and his counterpart Xi Jinping at an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

66 Pablo D. Faigelbaum and all., The Return to Protectionism, UCLA and NBER, October 12, 2019, pp.1-80.
72 Jeff Mason, David Lawder, “U.S. outlines ‘Phase 1’ trade deal with China, suspends October tariff hike”, Idem.
73 Jeff Mason, David Lawder, “U.S. outlines ‘Phase 1’ trade deal with China, suspends October tariff hike”, Ibidem.
74 Jeff Mason, David Lawder, “U.S. outlines ‘Phase 1’ trade deal with China, suspends October tariff hike”, Idem
ult/files/US


84 Reuters, “What is actually in the U.S.-China 'Phase One' trade deal?”, Idem.


(APEC) summit in Chile76, but Unfortunately, Chile has just cancelled this meeting because of the unrest that has been going on in the country lately77. But then, it is on 13th December that the US and China agreed on the text of a phase 1 agreement, including intellectual property rights, technology transfer, food and agricultural products, financial services, Currency, Expanding Trade and Dispute Resolution78. And the US and China agreed to complete the necessary procedures and discuss the details for officially signing the agreement79. As a result, the United States has suspended the additional customs duties that it was going to put in place on December 15th, 2019 on 160 billion dollars of Chinese products80. This would concern in particular: laptops, telephones and clothes81... And they have also committed to lowering the customs duties imposed on Chinese products as they go along82. For its part, China has pledged to increase US’s imports in a variety of sectors including agriculture, energy, pharmaceutical products and financial services83. And it has decided to suspend the pan to impose additional tariffs of either 10 percent or 5 percent on some US's products Which would be effective on December 15th, 201984. It also pledged to continue the suspension of the additional tariffs on American-made vehicles and auto parts85. Finally, this Phase 1 agreement was signed on January 15th, 2020 between US President Donald Trump and Chinese Vice Premier Liu He at the White House86. But it seems to be just a truce? And phase 2 is in prospect, which according to the Chinese’s vice finance minister Liao Min, I quote: "The phase 2 negotiations will depend on the implementation of the phase 1 agreement87". This leaves uncertainties and suspicions for the days to come. What if American President Donald Trump only needed a truce to show a victory, especially for the farmers? But why would he do that? For electoral reasons? (find in the appendix the precise dates summarizing the history of the trade war).

2. Globalization and America’s Conservatism

Who is the one who sees himself falling or pushing to fall without making a psychological or physical movement of resistance? Unless it is wanted by himself or he is in a deep sleep, in inertia’s situation or total or quasi-total incapacity... to do nothing. What if seeing yourself fall or pushing to fall gets up from paranoia? This question reveals the characters, dimensions of natural’s self-defense in the feeling situation. And how can we better defend ourselves, resist and take action in such a situation? These questions and metaphors strike the American’s hegemonic power to this day, which is being seen, and projected more and more in declination and facing its resistance task’s moment. And the questions would be to ask how far and for how much longer would American’s hegemonic power be able to resist? And then, but why?

Indeed, before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War in 1989, until the disappearance of the Soviet Union in 199188, the US’s foreign policy was to contain communist danger and Soviet
influence throughout the world\textsuperscript{89}. But with the fall of the Soviet Union\textsuperscript{90}, the United States remains the only major world power\textsuperscript{91}. Since 1991, the United States has been the only ones able to settle conflicts on the planet (world police)\textsuperscript{92}. This position may have favored them (the United States) and its allies in the redrawing of the geopolitical-strategic and economic map of the world\textsuperscript{93}.

But, since 2001, the United States has been engaged in a cycle of wars that have resulted in an explosion in federal budget spending\textsuperscript{94}, and to date has reduced its global legitimacy. In order to avoid a collapse of its economy and with the real estate boom\textsuperscript{95}, the United States initiated an accommodating credit policy (prime and subprime that led to the global financial crisis of 2008\textsuperscript{96}). At the same time, China is joining the WTO\textsuperscript{97}. From this, several American companies relocated to China\textsuperscript{98}. With the 2008’s subprime crisis, the United States and other Western economies have been hit hard by it\textsuperscript{99}. For their rescue, they had to restore the image of multilateralism\textsuperscript{100}. This will lead to ostensible interventions by various emerging powers\textsuperscript{101} in general and China\textsuperscript{102} in particular, in order to put an end to this powerful global financial crisis of 2008, which will later become economic, but also social for some countries\textsuperscript{103}.

Despite the crises experienced since 2001\textsuperscript{104} until the subprime crisis of 2008\textsuperscript{105} and the unprecedented rise of emerging powers\textsuperscript{106}, and particularly of China, in its strategies of engagement with the rest of the world, United States is still seeking to maintain its status as the crowning achievement of the end of the Cold War, and therefore the only major world power. But why is that? Isn't international system dynamic in its existential path? Can it be made static? And for how long then? What if the United States wants the inertia of the international system leaning largely in its favor? And for how long will it be possible? And if everything is struck by the famous thought attributed to one of the first Greek philosophers,

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{Wille} Dirk Willem te Velde, “The global financial crisis and developing countries”, in \textit{Overseas Development Institute}, Background Note October 2008, pp.1-5.
\end{thebibliography}

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Heraclitus of Ephesus\textsuperscript{107}, I quote: "everything flows, everything changes, everything passes and nothing remain\textsuperscript{108}". These questions demonstrate the complexity of American power's conservative strategy. A task that is no longer easy to solve at the moment. But why is that? Because of China's exponential rise? Hasn't contained China become a “super-metaphysical” issue for the United States?

Already under the Obama Administration, the famous "Rebalancing" strategy, which towards the end of 2011, practically in 2012, changed its name: from "Rebalancing" to "pivot" to Asia, is being implemented\textsuperscript{109}. Although the Rebalance builds on several initiatives launched under the George W. Bush’s Administration (the G-20, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the strategic partnership with India, the Pacific Command force posture changes, etc.\textsuperscript{110}) and early in the Obama’s Administration, it is widely acknowledged that it was presented publicly in President Obama's speech in Australia in 2011\textsuperscript{111}. A month before that speech, Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State at that time, had published an article in Foreign Policy magazine titled “America’s Pacific Century”, which to her, I quote: “The future of politics will be decided in Asia, not Afghanistan or Iraq, and the United States will be right at the center of the action\textsuperscript{112}”. Hillary's article is also considered as a fundamental document for the strategy. Both the speech and the article conveyed the US’s intentions to strengthen security, economic and governance engagement in the Asia-Pacific region\textsuperscript{113}. This strategy has found its substantial and operative essence in the choice and strategic use of different facets of engagements outlined above, and clearly demonstrates how Asia in general, East Asia and China in particular have become the new priorities in the development and orientation of US’s policies. This strategic shift was primarily aimed at repositioning and retaining American power in the world in general and in the Asia-Pacific Region in particular in order to acknowledge, and of course contain, China's rise. Because with its rise, China bothers and frightens\textsuperscript{114}? And it must therefore be contained?

This logic of containment in the sense of preserving American power continues to this day to guide American engagement around the world in general and with China in particular, despite the changes in approaches, tools and means to do so. If in Obama’s Administration, the political-diplomatic and security approach has played a preponderant role in this strategy of containment, Trump’s Administration gives more importance to the economic-security approach\textsuperscript{115}. And the Asia-Pacific Region is still the most worrying region for American strategies, just a few nuances can be seen with the new name: "Indo-Pacific Region". And this one (Trump’s Administration), as we can see with its famous slogans, namely: "America First!\textsuperscript{116}" "Make America Great Again!\textsuperscript{117}", as was the case for Obama's Administration, also seeks to preserve and restore American power throughout the world. In its approach, leaning more towards the economic-security dimension, Trump Administration’s policy, to date, seeking to contain the emergence of other powers by all possible, necessary, appropriate or inappropriate means—even—by destroying and killing their own beloved...
children of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century: the multilateralism, to promote isolationism in one way or another or even to “de-globalize” the current era of globalization, for its “re-globalizing”. But rather, formerly supporter and defender of the foundations of the present era of globalization. Is the latter no longer beneficial to them now? Or Again, to “de-regionalize” in order to “re-regionalize”, and by strategically using the different facets of engagements as a pinpoint to the introduction of this paper. As we can see today, its economic coercions not only against China, directly provocating the current famous trade war, but also against Mexico, Canada, France, Brazil, Argentina and other economies, states and other international institutions and/or actors that threaten in one way or another its power (see Appendix, Key dates of the trade war). And its tenacity at all costs in Syria, Afghanistan, and at the Middle East in general (despite its mistakes and the powerlessness of its power118), in the logic of restoring its economy and maintaining its position of hyper-power, and therefore, hegemony throughout the world.

The increasingly ostensible losses and reductions of its legitimacy and engagements to the rest of the world, with voices rising from everywhere, talking about the decline of its hyper-power across the globe, United States don’t want to remain crossed hands for a smooth transition of its hegemonic power, and of its governing system to the rest of the world, at the risk of losing its prestige, positions and advantages across the globe. From this flow its power strategies, which they adapt according to the circumstances to the different facets of engagements mentioned-above, within the framework of the conservative policies of its hegemonic power and especially, the conservation of its advantages (cultural, economic, technological...) to others. And China, as was also the case during Obama’s Administration, by its exponential rise119, to date, has emerged as the number one target of American policies, directly or indirectly is affected by the agitations, actions and movements in time or counter-time of US’s engagements around the world in line with its conservative vision. And why is that? Does the United States no longer want to talk about the rise of China? To contain it? Is it possible? Because, if already the evaluation of Obama's strategy of the “pivot to Asia” raises problems for its effectiveness, its final results in general seem to demonstrate the inefficiency of this strategy. Because China is still on its way up, and would it be the reason for its revision by Trump’s Administration? Isn't it that the United States overestimates China's rise? Why would they do it? To be able to legitimize their fear, decisions, actions, reactions and agitations against China by chance? Or isn't American President Donald Trump stubborn about China's rise? His famous rehearsal: "China! China! China! China"! Paranoid? What if it was just paranoid? This makes the globe, the international arena, increasingly complex, uncertain, suspicious and quasi-uncontrollable, but it leads us to believe in a reorganization of the world, in the birth of another form of globalization, and in the movement or quasi-movement of the world’s gravitational center.

The United States, despite its conservative tenacity of its hegemonic power in its engagements to the rest of the world, and its clear vision against the multipolar world, at the risk of being qualified as first among equals, the events’ succession, as well as the futurology are leaning increasingly against its hegemonic power, as well as for its conservation. The cumulative weaknesses of its engagements around the world, the development of a huge debt bubble in its economy120 and the long stagnation of its economic growth121 coincide with the rise of emerging countries’ (BRICS122) engagements, and particularly of Chinese’s economy123. The latter, day after day, week after week, month after month and year after year, is growing dramatically. Of course, this is what makes it the second largest economic power in the world in


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terms of nominal GDP, behind the American economy, and washing its image to occupy a respectful position in the international arena. That shifting more and more the power structure’s idea on the current international system, with increasingly ostensible fluctuations in the world’s gravitational center, and therefore complex. The current trade war between them and China better reflects the backpedaling of their conservative policies around the world. US President Donald Trump’s tweet of 04th April 2018, despite its “provocative nature”, is indeed Claire about this, I quote: “We are not in a trade war with China, that war was lost many years ago by the foolish, or incompetent, people who represented the U.S.”. And what if towards the end of the twentieth century and in this twenty-first century, had nature or energy become Chinese by chance? Is it possible? And if it were possible? these questions may seem funny, but it leads us to think again about China's extraordinary rise, its growing affirmation on the international arena.

3. Globalization and Chinese’s affirmation

How far should we affirm ourselves or rise so as not to disturb and move others in their position in the international arena? Is the affirmation or rise a sin in the international arena? Is it possible to affirm oneself or rise peacefully without competition, conflict in a world of rational competitors? Are competition and conflict intrinsically inherent to some extent in the international arena? Is the affirmation or rise of other on the international arena a misfortune for some? These questions, which may be surprising to some, highlight the problem of Chinese’s affirmation or rise in the international arena towards the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of this twenty-first century.

Strongly following and since the implementation of the 1978’s reforms and opening up policy initiated by Deng Xiaoping, followed by his successors through Jiang Zemin 1993-2003, Hu Jintao 2003-2013 and Xi Jinping 2013-to this day, China has managed to boost and maintain an upward growth rate, which is almost the reason for its exponential rise, until now, to become a potential peer-competitor of United States. Isn’t it a miracle? Because the way in which Deng Xiaoping and his successors were able to perfect the foundations of hard work, determination and hope, put in place by Chairman Mao Zedong, despite his mistakes, to push China on the path of its rise, an exponential affirmation, is unique in the world: So far we have not seen any other example of this kind, there is no other state in the world that has managed to achieve such a miracle feat, starting from the bottom of the development scale that China was at that time and then becoming a kind of global economic Eldorado.

Two of Deng Xiaoping’s favorite sayings better reflect the image of his reforms and opening up policy that began in the late 1970s, marking China’s effective introduction into the games of globalization of that time. Firstly, I quote: "it doesn't matter if a cat is black or white, the one who catches the mouse is the right one". Secondly, I quote: "touching stones to cross the river". This Deng reform and opening up policy’s thoughts led China to move from a Soviet-style planned economy to a socialism (with Chinese’s characteristics) for a major modernization’s program (affecting the agricultural, industrial, science and technology, national defense—military sectors), which means that collectivization of agriculture is giving

127 Yu Jie and all., From Deng to Xi: Economic Reform, The New Silk Road, and the Return of the Middle Kingdom, LSE IDEAS Special Report, May 2017, pp.1-44.
132 Congress of the United States, China under the four modernizations, Joint Economic Committee, Part 1, August 13, 1982, pp.1-610.
way to a system of individual land accountability; managers have been introduced in industrial sectors, allowing many small businesses to flourish; price controls have been relaxed (except for basic necessities for farmers); the creation of special economic zones, proof of its pronounced and gradual integration into globalization, seeking to attract more foreign capital.

Thanks to the fruits of the reforms and opening up policy pinned above, China has been able to achieve the necessary prowess for its rise. Of this, the figures speak for themselves. As we can see, the economic sector is taking a prominent place in China's rising strategy. From the end of the Cold War, China's strategic approach favors the achievement of development that is beneficial for China and its partners through increasing economic interchanges made possible by globalization. This vision also reflects some extent its affirmation’s power strategy in this new era of globalization. And so, Deng Xiaoping's successors continued the reforms and opening up policy, establishing a "socialist market economy (with Chinese characteristics)". As a result, since taking power in 1993, Jiang Zemin has had the objective of achieving and strengthening China's integration into the world through increasing its participation in international organizations and institutions. From this, China was presented as a major trading partner for the world's major powers. Its economic and attractive powers were based at that time on low labor costs, its high consumer market capacity and the export of manufactured goods, which were also facilitated by its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, of course with the support of the United States. Although the latter became its main partner, China invested more and more in other emerging countries and in Africa. As a result, China is now emerging as a new geopolitical pole in East Asia, but its conception of power, long centered on Asia, is changing rapidly and is increasingly manifesting itself on other continents. And China's affirmation model is unique in that it focuses on trade and investment for its affirmation, without claiming to propagate its economic and political model and defending non-interference...

However, it is under the presidency of Hu Jintao (2003-2013), but especially since the arrival of the presidency of his successor Xi Jinping in 2013, that China has multiplied its initiatives to consolidate and affirm the status of its power in a growing number of areas. First, on the economic and financial side, China is striving to move up the scale from a growth model based on exports and investment to one based on domestic consumption, innovation and better use of domestic financial resources. In the military field, China is modernizing its capabilities, restructuring its army, and now has all the characteristics of a “regional-level military power”. This modernization is being driven in parallel by the desire to become a technological power, an objective supported by massive investments in research and development and the

142 By 1980, China had already joined the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Eswar Prasad and al., China’s Growth and Integration into the World Economy Prospects and Challenges, International Monetary Fund, 2004, pp.1-66.
143 Philip Levy, "Was Letting China into the WTO a Mistake? Why There Were No Better Alternatives", in Foreign Affairs, April 2, 2018.
144 Johanna JANSSON, The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), the Centre for Chinese Studies, University of Stellenbosch, August 2009.

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encouragement of civil-military integration. China is also encouraging massive investment in the energy sector, with the aim of becoming a “green power”, a leader in alternative energies. All these orientations are more actively defended by Chinese diplomacy, while the country is consolidating its status as a “diplomatic power”, strengthening its network of representations abroad, and creating new institutions, think tanks, forums and other bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms dedicated to promoting its interests and powers abroad. China also wishes to acquire power status in other fields, in particular space power status—while it is carrying out lunar and Mars exploration programs, human spaceflight, scientific, commercial or military satellite launches, and is encouraging the development of the public space industry, but also and increasingly of the private space industry.

Moreover, Xi Jinping's presidency era (since 2013-) seems to present itself today as a decisive era, a major stakes and one of the most important eras of Chinese’s history, not only for reasons of affirmation, rise of China in the international arena, but also for projection’s reasons of the near future of Chinese’s power and the future’s changes and movements of—in the current international power structure. In his innovative visions of international relations and for China’s peaceful rise, he calls for the "New type of great power relationship", non-conflicts, mutual-respects, win-win cooperation, and thus redefining the global governance system with justice, fairness, equality, and peaceful cooperation views. That raises hope with a commitment to "build a community of shared future for mankind". In the logic and inspiration of its predecessors, Xi Jinping's presidency puts forward the thought of the "Chinese dream", "the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation", which claims to follow the path and logic of "socialism with Chinese characteristics for a New Era". It laid out a long flock of national goals for 2050 (2049), such as making China a nation with pioneering global influence, turning the military into a world class force, eradicating extreme poverty, and reiterated a pledge to continue to open up the country's markets and provide a level playing field for businesses. To this end, multilateralism seems to be one of the main battle horses of Xi Jinping’s presidency. This explains the creative announcement and continued implementation of the "century’s program": the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), accompanied with the ideas of south-south cooperation, win-win cooperation, …aimed at strengthening the land, sea and even digital routes that unite China with the rest of the world, based on a "Hercules—titan” plan of investments, new infrastructure, and the multiplication of political and trade agreements. This is in addition to the idea of creation and strong momentum at other multilaterals institutions, such as The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB—2014), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Boao Forum for Asia, BRICS, the 16+1 group, etc.

149 Thierry de Montbrial and Dominique David, Rapport Annuel Mondial sur le système économique et les stratégies, Chine, la nouvelle puissance, Idem.
150 Thierry de Montbrial and Dominique David, Rapport Annuel Mondial sur le système économique et les stratégies, Chine, la nouvelle puissance, Idem.
That brings up more and more the idea of “cooperative globalization”, while insisting on respect for the principles of peaceful coexistence\(^{162}\) in the idea of promoting peace and sustainable development on our planet. And it is increasingly pushing to its close ties with Russia and other powers (Italia, France…) in particular and the rest of the world in general. Through this logic, other Western powers, particularly the United States, are undermining, given the ostensible losses and reductions of their powers and legitimacy towards the rest of the world, because of the profound balance of their powers and legitimacy around the world. But, beyond multilateralism, it is the key technology, artificial intelligence that still seems to be one of the battle horses of Xi Jinping's presidency. This is the assault it is making, in the aftermath, in 2015, by launching the "Made in China 2025\(^{163}\) program, designed to ensure China's leadership on the key sectors considered to be of the future, including clean vehicles (electric vehicles that China already dominates in terms of production\(^{164}\), biotechnology, robotics, aeronautics, etc.

Therefore, in a lapidary way, let us underline here that between 1979 and 2010 there was what is known as the "Chinese's miracle\(^{165}\); China's GDP grew by about 10% every year\(^{166}\). In 2005 alone, China's trade with the rest of the world grew by 23.2%, to a value of $1,422 billion and a trade surplus of $102 billion, which tripled in value compared to the previous year\(^{167}\). Having become the world's sixth largest economy since the end of 2004\(^{168}\). In 2010, China became the world's second largest economy, overtaking the Japanese economy\(^{169}\). And it is asserting itself as a great power in the scientific field, the result of an effort begun and then a decade later\(^{170}\). However, it is in 2012 and 2013 that is seen the first signs of a slowdown in growth, with GDP growth drying up to only 7.8% in those years\(^{171}\). In 2014, the Chinese’s government revised its forecasts downwards (around 6.5% until 2020)\(^{172}\). In the same year (2014), China became the world's leading economic power (in terms of GDP measured in purchasing power parity). China has also emerged as the leading host country for international investment\(^{173}\), and the leading manufacturing power since 2011\(^{174}\), and the world's leading exporter since 2009, ahead of the United States\(^{175}\). Since 2005, China is affirmed as the world’s largest foreign exchange reserves\(^{176}\) and the World’s creditor, and the United States as the World’s debtor\(^{177}\). In January 2019, With Chang’e-4, China was the first country to be able to discover the hidden side of the moon. In May of the same year, Yutu-2, is said to have found two new minerals: olivine, which crystallizes in the orthorhombic system, and pyroxene, with the low calcium content\(^{178}\). China is once again affirming itself with its 5G or fifth generation of mobile phone standards\(^{179}\).
which it carefully dominates in today's world, and its "made in China 2025" program gives great hope. Is there a risk that Silicon Valley will not maintain its global leadership for very long? In addition, during the military parade to mark the 70th anniversary of the People's Republic of China, the latter presented for the first time Dongfeng-41 (DF-41) missiles, intercontinental ballistic missiles, which, according to experts, made it possible to reach American territory in 30 minutes. But also, the DF-17, a hypersonic ballistic missile that launches a hypersonic glider. Only the United States and Russia have this type of equipment. Another missile is the JL-2, an intercontinental sea-ground missile launched by nuclear-powered missile submarines. And since the end of November 2019, China now has the largest diplomatic network in the world, with 169 embassies and 96 consulates, compared to 168 embassies and 88 consulates for the United States. Finally, the world's various prospective studies are leaning in China's favor, in the sense of overtaking the United States totally or almost totally in various fields by 2030. Already, Yan Xuetong in his famous book published in 2013 Inertia of History (China and World in Future Ten Years), compares and explains the power changes between China and America in the past ten years. He pinpoints the idea that there will be two super powers: the United States and China in 2023 to form a bipolar structure. Is this what makes China today one of the advocates pronounced for and the United States relentless offenders against this new era of globalization? And do they push the United States to initiate the trade wars, and particularly against China, one of the expressions of their entry with the latter (China) into the power transition trap?

4. Sino-American Trade War: United States and China in power transition's trap?

The combined of America's conservatism with the affirmation, the rise of China, clashes, and gives the Sino-American trade war? And why is that? To answer these questions, the key ideas of power transition theory, as outlined by its author, Abramo Firmo Kenneth Organski, quickly jump out at us for a brief clarification of this questioning. Because we strongly believe that theoretical ideas are better used in the process of simplification, elucidation, of explaining international realities and/or facts. And the US-China trade war defines as an international reality, deserves a theoretical elucidation in order to make clear as much as possible its understanding. And at the same time, we believe that theoretical ideas serve to elucidate international facts and/or realities, none are perfect, especially as they say: perfection is not of this world. There is a strong complementarity in the world of theoretical ideas in the process of explanation, simplification, elucidation of international facts and/or realities.

Indeed, it is difficult for us to sketch here in detail all the theoretical meanders provided by A.F.K. Organski as conception and ideas covered by power transition theory, which is not even our primary concern. His creative work on this theory, World Politics, published in 1958, outlines in detail the necessary and in-depth details of the theory. But here we rather want to use this theory to identify the different independent variables that can explain the current US-China trade war.

Already in his above-mentioned book, A.F.K. Organski makes a clear prediction of potential’s China rise and its impact on the international security order. About 60 years ago, long before China embarked on its remarkable development path, Organski explained the dynamics of the potential power transition war between the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as a rising challenger and the United States as a declining...


184 Sarah Boumphrey and al., China overtakes the US as the world’s largest economy: impact on industries and consumers worldwide, Euromonitor International, 2014, pp.1-54.


hegemon in the international system (Organski, 1968: 338–376). He envisaged that the rise of China through its internal development would be spectacular, and the power of China ought to eventually become greater and the Western powers will find that the most serious threat to their supremacy comes from China (Organski, 1968: 361).

In a short way, Woosang Kim and Scott Gates point out that Organski’s power transition theory rests on two fundamental observations. The first is that a country’s power stems from internal development. Since development occurs at different rates, nations will rise and fall relative to one another. The second fundamental for power transition theory is that the international system is decisively shaped by the dominant nation, the hegemon. Those occasions in which a rising power overtakes the dominant power are called power transitions. These transitions may be peaceful as in the case of the United States overtaking Britain, when the rising power is satisfied with the global order. In some cases, the power transition may lead to war as when a dissatisfied power, Germany, rose in power vis-à-vis the hegemon, Britain.

It is in this way that we want to clearly sketch out the different independent variables proposed by the power transition theory that can explain the rise of the conflict (war) between the dominant power in declination and the rising one. These variables may be several to some extent, but here we identify three, describing themselves on these three hypotheses, namely: if there is power parity between the dominant power and challenger, if the challenger surpasses the dominant power (overtaking), and if the challenger is dissatisfied.

In most cases, when we talk about a conflict that could arise, we think more of the notion of traditional war (armed war with bloodshed). As for our case, it is rather a question of the trade war, which could also be technological..., an area of directly quantifiable benefits in terms of money, of direct accumulation of money, which nowadays seems very sensitive for the cold monsters, colder than the cold monsters themselves. Because, we can say here that: if there is the will, money answers all or quasi-all or either money can be transformed into all or quasi-all. And so, we want now to circumscribe these independent variables in relation to our dependent variable, which is the current US-China trade war. The main question would be: why did this US-China trade war appear? because of the US-China’s power parity? Is there such parity? Or because of China's outperformance to the United States? Has China really surpassed the United States? Or because of China's dissatisfaction with the US’s decisions and actions? At what level and in what way is China dissatisfied? In the following lines, we want to analyze these different independent variables in a successive and brief way.

-US-China’s power parity

Defining power parity as the equality between the two countries’ powers. It is difficult to establish this parity in factual terms and supporting figures between the United States and China at this time. Until proven otherwise, the United States still dominates to some extent the various fields of international life, including political, military, cultural, legal, economic and technological fields to a certain extent (and therefore not in absolute). But on the other hand, this parity can be established in a nominal (“nominal power parity”) and futurological (“futurological power parity”) ways. We can better pinpoint here that the two countries (the United States and China) both of them are the World’s largest economies and the countries with the most trade transactions, both are the most important drivers of global growth, and the most important providers of new global technologies. In addition, they are the main destinations for foreign

investment in the world. And futurological prospecting is more and more moving in the direction of achieving this parity between the two in various fields.

Here, with this variable, we will say that the current US-China trade war would be the result of the United States' troubles. They no longer feel comfortable (as they used to) with this nominal and futurological power parity, which is constantly rising and talking more and more between them and China, at the risk of being caught up and pushed by the latter or of being qualified as the first among equals. And the best way for them was to provoke a trade war with China, to “de-globalize”—for “re-globalizing”, to “de-regionalize”—for “re-regionalizing”, in order to contain this nominal parity for the time being, and then futurological, in order to maintain and ensure their domination and superiority throughout the world.

But already the impression is that this variable does not seem to be the most dominant in explaining this current US-China trade war. Because it seems to be recovering from paranoia and speculation to some extent, let us now move on to the second variable.

➢ China's outperformance to the United States

By defining outperformance as an absolute, total overtaking of the rising power over the dominant power. The current comparative reality of the Sino-American powers gives the opposite result. Because, totally, globally, absolutely speaking, China has not yet managed to overtake the United States, but also far from doing so. On the other hand, if the outperformance or surpassing is understood in the sense of a relative, partial and futurological overtaking of the rising power over the dominant power. This is getting interesting, because to date, we can count some specific activities, fields that China has already surpassed the United States. And futurological prospecting is turning more and more in favor of China in the sense of overtaking the United States by the year 2030, not far from it, of course, so as not to fear as a great dominant power for more than a century ago (see the data provided above in the previous point). To date, China is considered as the leading power in manufacturing industries, the leading host country for international investment, the world’s leading exporter, the leading power of the fifth generation of mobile phone standards (with its 5G power), and the leading economic power in terms of GDP measured in purchasing power parity, as shown in the graph below.

**Figure 4. GDP in purchasing power parity by country (1990-2015)**


Here with this variable, we will say that this current US-China trade war would be the result of China's partial, relative and futurological overtaking to the United States. The latter does not want to be gradually and peacefully overtaken for the moment, and then futurological, by China, at the risk of totally, absolutely or quasi-totally/absolutely losing their domination and superiority throughout the world. And the best way for them was to provoke this war in order to contain its next probable overruns by China in various other areas, and to push China a little bit, in the sense of slowing down or stopping its rise, to contain it. A kind of warning and message for China, to say that we are not ready or do not want to give up (peacefully or easily)


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our leadership in the world. At the risk of losing their honors and benefits that they still have in the international arena.

Already here, the impression is that this variable seems to be more dominant than the first in explaining this current US-China trade war. Because, it is more concrete at the moment, and increasingly reflects the reality of Sino-American relations in this new era of globalization. Let us now move on to the third variable.

- **China's dissatisfaction**

By defining dissatisfaction as an absolute, total discontent on the part of the challenger. It may not be too much in line with the current Sino-American reality. Because China does not feel totally dissatisfied with the existing system. But rather by defining dissatisfaction as a relative discontent experienced by the challenger when things, businesses are not as it wishes them to be. This becomes interesting in our case study. Because, we can see here that the United States has been able to push China to be dissatisfied through its measures, decisions and martial actions against it, by unilaterally, abruptly and strongly taxing Chinese exports in its territory, accompanied by threats of all kinds and other additional taxes in the future (see the first point of this paper and the appendix, Key Dates of the trade war), in the sense of shocking and pushing China to react, this is the source of China's relative dissatisfaction.

Here with this variable, we will say that this current US-China trade war would be the result of the United States' push for China's relative dissatisfaction. Strongly following the strong blow of the United States, China could not contain its discontent. The day after its relative dissatisfaction, it announced its replies (see the first point of this paper and the appendix, Key Dates of the trade war). And boom! The trade war has begun.

Already here the impression is that this variable does not seem to be more dominant than the second, perhaps more dominant than the first in explaining this current US-China trade war. To say that the affirmation, the increasing rise of China in the international arena no longer reassures the United States to a certain extent of the maintenance of the geo-political-strategic and economic balances of the world, leaning largely in their favor, before China's exponential rise. Hence, the substantial reason for their conservative policies, which they apply rationally, through the rational choice they make according to the circumstances, to different types of engagements as outlined above. This is for fear of being qualified in the coming days as first among equals or of being surpassed in a total, absolute or quasi-total, quasi-absolute in the coming days by China. At the risk of losing more, relatively, absolutely, or quasi-absolutely their advantages, honor, position, leadership and legitimacy on the international arena. And these two strategies (conservative and affirmative) combined in this new era of globalization, clashes, and produce this current US-China trade war, which could also be technological, financial... one of the ways for the United States to contain, stop and warn China in its exponential rise. But of course, yes, we believe that this war could also be avoided.

**Conclusion**

Can America and China escape Thucydides's trap? That is the famous central question raised by Graham Allison in his recent book analyzing Sino-American relations, focusing on the writings of Thucydides, witness and author of the famous book: "The Peloponnesian War", war opposed Sparta (dominant power, leader of Peloponnesian’s league) to Athens (rising power, leader of Delos’s league) in 431-404 BC, whose cause, as Allison wrote in reference to Thucydides' writings: "It was the rise of Athens and the fear that this instilled in Sparta that made war inevitable". Sparta, under the pretext of territorial conflicts, geopolitical disputes between the memberships of the two leagues and the cries of its allies, rationally attacked Athens because it feared losing its supremacy over the international system at that time and especially over the Peloponnesian’s league that it led. To enrich his thesis, he was able to collect from the 15th century to the present day sixteen cases that the world has already been confronted with the Thucydides’s trap, leading twelve times to war (see appendix 1.). And so, the Thucydides’s trap is imposed

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when an emerging power comes to challenge the ruling power. Thus, yesterday was Athens against Sparta, and its sixteen cases collected (see appendix 1.). And perhaps today or tomorrow the United States against China. The war between the latter would be inevitable, warns Graham Allison, unless both countries circumvent the Thucydides’s trap. That is his thesis. Despite its military conception of war and also the idea that China is not easily comparable to the European powers to achieve the same results, does the current US-China trade war not reinforce Allison’s thesis? Because, with the key ideas developed by him, we will say that this current US-China trade war would be the result, product of China’s exponential rise (rising power) and the fear of the United States (dominant power). And it is here that we understand, the theoretical ideas developed by Graham Allison in this interesting book, share almost a lot of similarities with the power transition theory, as stigmatized by its author, A.F.K. Organski, to the point of appearing to some extent practically the same ideas. And so, here, sketch in depth Graham Allison's analyses, will longer include us in the tautology of thoughts.

Also, Can China rise peacefully? That is the famous central question of John Mearsheimer's ideas in his offensive realism. This question is answered by theoretical explanations, Mearsheimer points out. In his book "The Tragedy of Great Power Politics" (2001, 2014—Updated Edition), he claims to be a neo-realist (structural-realist), not defensive like Kenneth Waltz, but rather offensive. It is only interested in the great powers (Great Power Politics), because of their preponderances on the international arena. He also calls for the non-separation of economic means from those of politics and security, because the state always ends up transforming its economic means into political and security means. And the power of his ideas comes deeply from his predictions and analyses of Sino-American relations[197]. He explains international realities through on the basis of these famous five (5) assumptions (The international system is anarchic (I), Great powers inherently possess some offensive military capability (II), States can never be certain about other states' intentions (III), Survival is the primary goal of great Powers (IV), and Great powers are rational actors (V)); and, three (3) behaviors (Fear (I), Self-help (II), and maximization of power, to be very powerful, while not pursuing the global hegemon because of the stopping effects of oceans, but rather regional hegemony by making sure not to have peer-competitors in other regions (III)[198], which are conditioned the decisions and actions of the major powers on the international arena, these are the key ideas of his offensive realism. Despite criticism of his thinking by other authors[199], Mearsheimer also shares some points with A.F.K. Organski's ideas to some extent. With its offensive realism, we can say here that the current US-China trade war would be the result of conservative’s American policies aimed at containing China's rise, for fear that the latter may dominate the East Asian region in absolute terms, and subsequently become their peer-competitor, but whereas a regional hegemon does not want peers, the anarchy of the international structure contributes to the impossibility of preventing this war. And self-help and survival’s ideas drive Sino-Americans' decisions, actions and reactions to give as a result this current US-China trade war.

Again Also, the same with Allison’s case, George Modelski’s long-cycle theory also shares many ideas with the power-transition theory. The theory attempts to explain the curiously regular cycles of world leadership and global war, each of which lasts about 100 years[200]. According to George Modelski and William R. Thompson[201], the theory’s primary proponents, every cycle consists of four phases. Out of a global war, a new dominant world power emerges from the struggle for global leadership and maintains its


position through naval power. However, the cost associated with global leadership contribute to the world power’s decline, giving way to two new stages: “de-legitimation” (decline in relative power) and “de-concentration” (challenge by emerging rivals). “De-concentration” proceeds until the new contenders for world leadership attempt to push the declining leader out of its hegemonic position. Overall, periods of hegemony are associated with peace, and periods of hegemonic decline are associated with war. Table n°2 in the appendix depicts the five most recent cycles of leadership in world history. It is here that we can see the rapprochement of Modelski's ideas with those of A.F.K. Organski in explaining the reason for this current US-China trade war. From this, this war would be explained as the result of the (relative) decline of the American hegemonic power, its probable entry into the phase of “delegitimization” or “de-concentration”, and the rise of China. Simply because, as noted above, the periods of hegemonic decline are associated with war. Because, often the hegemon does not want to see itself in declination to the benefit of other rising powers, and precisely cross its arms without doing anything.

The purpose of this paper was to explain why the current US-China trade war has emerged, by highlighting the key ideas of their power strategies in this new era of globalization, while using the key independent variables that proposed the power transition theory, as stigmatized by its author, A.F.K. Organski. In order to contribute at least a little to the existing literature on the subject, and to understand at least a little about the complexity in which we are living in this new era of great transformations. Throughout this reasoning, we have retained the idea that: with globalization, the world is becoming more and more a global village, is changing more and more, and creates satisfaction for some and dissatisfaction for others according to cases and assessments, and therefore complex. As a result, each global actor, and in particular the state, seeks to pull the sheet on its side on the basis of its national interest and in the logic of its survival, by rationally using in its power strategies the different types of engagements according to the circumstances, which could be “soft”, “hard”, “smart”, “special soft” or “special hard” in order to better position it on the international arena. The rational choice of these different types of engagements seems to be becoming more and more a puzzle for states, especially with increasingly unfortunate constants of the powerlessness of power in solving some international differences. This leads to the creation at the same time as different kinds of conflicts, competitions, wars and cooperation between actors, states on the international arena, and makes the world more and more complex. And this complexity of the world is becoming increasingly complex when we ask ourselves questions such as: Who governs the world? What kind of world are we living in now? Hegemonic/Unipolar? Bi or Multipolar? Short questions, but which seem difficult to answer to date.

The United States and China, in this new era of globalization, seem to be developing two opposing visions of power strategies, the first one in the direction of conservation and the second in the direction of affirmation. The essential thing is that the exponential rise of one is almost frightening to the other, at the risk of losing relatively, totally or quasi-totally its position, prestige, honor, legitimacy and advantage in the international arena. At the same time, this creates ideas for cooperation, competition, conflict and war between them. Hence, the emergence of the current US-China trade war, which began at the beginning of the year 2018 (see the first point of this paper and the appendix, Key Dates of the trade war), and which, under the pretext of the trade deficit dating back to the 1980s (see the figure 3.), the United States wants to settle all these accounts with China to date. The three key independent variables that provided the power transition theory, as stigmatized by its author A.F.K. Organski, are described on the three hypotheses, namely: if there is power parity between the dominant power and challenger (rising power), if the challenger surpasses the dominant power (overtaking), and if the challenger is dissatisfied. And in this present paper, it is the second variable that seemed to be the most dominant. This current US-China appears to be the result of China's partial, relative and futurological overtaking the United States. Because, the United States, afraid of being gradually and peacefully overtaken for the moment, and then futurological by China, they were able to rationally opt for the “hard engagement”202 with the latter, despite its disadvantages, in order to contain China's exponential rise, at risk for them to lose totally, quasi-totally, absolutely or quasi-absolutely their dominance, positions, honors, prestige, advantages and superiorities that they have on the international arena.

202 That they try to combine with other types of engagements. This produces in the sometimte the situations of cooperation, competition, containment, conflict and war.
and across the globe in general. This situation makes the description of our current world more and more complex, which seems to be becoming like what the Greek thinker Thucydides wrote: "The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must". But we strongly believe, however, that this war could have been avoided. If two tigers cannot live on the same mountain, the Yin and Yang can always coexist. What if the United States and China would agree to coexist like Yin and Yang? Finally, this US-China trade war’s issue, is complex and constantly evolving, other writings and research in perspective will be well advised. These are the cases of the questions concerning the future of this war, its implications and impacts on world economic stability, its repercussions on the Sino-American economies, the winner and loser of this war, the individual level of explanation of this war, Trump's perception of this war, the projection of this war after Trump, questions relating to solutions to put an end to this war, and the future Sino-American relations after this war or if it continued.

Appendix

Annexe.1. Thucydides’s trap cases (Graham Allison)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>№</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Ruling Power</th>
<th>Rising Power</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Late 15th century</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Global empire and trade</td>
<td>No war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>First half of 16th century</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Hapsburgs</td>
<td>Land power in western Europe</td>
<td>War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>16th and 17th centuries</td>
<td>Hapsburgs</td>
<td>Ottoman Empire</td>
<td>Land power in central and eastern Europe, sea power in the Mediterranean</td>
<td>War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>First half of 17th century</td>
<td>Hapsburgs</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Land and sea power in northern Europe</td>
<td>War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mid-to-late 17th century</td>
<td>Dutch Republic</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Global empire, sea power, and trade</td>
<td>War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Late 17th to mid-18th centuries</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>Global empire and European land power</td>
<td>War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Late 18th and early 19th centuries</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Land and sea power in Europe</td>
<td>War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mid-19th century</td>
<td>France and United Kingdom</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Global empire, influence in Central Asia and eastern Mediterranean</td>
<td>War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mid-19th century</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Land power in Europe</td>
<td>War</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Late 19th and early 20th centuries</td>
<td>China and Russia</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Land and sea power in East Asia</td>
<td>War</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Early-20th century</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Global economic dominance and naval supremacy in the Western Hemisphere</td>
<td>No war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Early-20th century</td>
<td>United Kingdom supported by France, Russia</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Land power in Europe and global sea power</td>
<td>War</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Mid-20th century</td>
<td>Soviet Union, France, UK</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Land and sea power in Europe</td>
<td>War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Mid-20th century</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Sea power and influence in the Asia-Pacific region</td>
<td>War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1940s–1980s</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>Global power</td>
<td>No war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>1990s–present</td>
<td>United Kingdom and France</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Political influence in Europe</td>
<td>No war</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Annex 2. Long-cycle theory’s Cases (George Modelski)
Phase | Hegemon | Years | Wars | Challenger
---|---|---|---|---
Global war | Portugal | 1494-1516 | Italian/Indian Ocean Wars | Spain
World power | | 1516-1539 | | |
De-legitimation | | 1540-1560 | | |
De-concentration | | 1560-1580 | | |
Global war | Netherlands | 1580-1609 | Spanish-Dutch War | France
World power | | 1609-1639 | | |
De-legitimation | | 1640-1660 | | |
De-concentration | | 1660-1688 | | |
Global war | Britain | 1688-1713 | Wars of Louis XIV | France
World power | | 1714-1740 | | |
De-legitimation | | 1740-1763 | | |
De-concentration | | 1764-1792 | | |
Global war | Britain | 1792-1815 | French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars | Germany
World power | | 1815-1849 | | |
De-legitimation | | 1850-1873 | | |
De-concentration | | 1874-1914 | | |
Global war | United States | 1914-1945 | World Wars I and II | |
World power | | 1945-1973 | | |
De-legitimation | | 1973- | | |
De-concentration | | | | |

**The Key Dates of the Trade War**

**2018**

- January 22nd, 2018: Implementation of customs taxes on washing machines and solar panels by US President Donald Trump. China is the main producer of solar panels and the leading exporter of washing machines to the United States.
- March 1st, 2018: Donald Trump's announcement on Twitter of his intention to impose customs duties on aluminum and steel imported into the country.
- 8th March 2018: Signing of a decree for the imposition of customs duties of 10% on US aluminum imports and 25% on US steel imports. Several countries are exempt except China.
- 22nd March 2018: The American President announced that the country will impose a new tax on $60 billion of Chinese imports on products on the black list established by Donald Trump's advisor. He justifies this increase in customs duties by the theft of intellectual property by Chinese companies; it appears that 1,300 Chinese's products are concerned.
- 23rd March 2018: China also responded to the Americans by revealing a list of 128 products whose customs duties should increase by 15% for 120 products such as fresh fruit and 25% for 8 products including pork.
- April 2nd, 2018: China triggers punitive measures announced on 128 products following American silence.
- April 3rd, 2018: The United States immediately responded by publishing a provisional list of imported products likely to be subject to new tariffs in the following areas: aeronautics, information and communication technologies or robotics.
- April 4th, 2018: China is responding to this announcement by increasing tariffs on more strategic products such as soybeans, automobiles and aeronautics. This list includes 106 product families on which the United States depends.
- May 31st, 2018: Canada, Mexico and the European Union are no longer exempt from tariffs on steel and aluminum. Imports from the above-mentioned countries are now at tariffs of 25% for steel and 10% for aluminum. Canada decides not to let this happen and announces that it will retaliate by overpricing American products. The European Union affirms its willingness to tax products from the United States in return.
- June 1st, 2018: The European Union and Canada file a WTO complaint against the United States. Mexico followed them a few days later.
- June 22nd, 2018: The European Union is not letting this happen and is announcing 25% customs duties on various American products such as Bourbon, Jeans and tobacco. For Harley Davidson motorcycles, customs duties will increase from 6% to 31%. And it is not over, the EU reserves the right to overtax 3.6 billion additional imports within 3 years.
1. July 1st, 2018: In turn, Canada imposes tariffs on the United States of 25% on steel and 10% on aluminum as well as 10% on 200 other products.

2. July 6th, 2018: This is the official beginning of the trade war. The United States is introducing new tariffs of 25% on 818 Chinese products. Thus, 34 billion Chinese imports are targeted with another 16 billion dollars of imports to be added in the coming days.

3. July 6th, 2018: China's response was swift and the country accused American President Donald Trump of having launched "the biggest trade war in economic history" and consequently, seized the World Trade Organization to challenge American taxation.

4. July 6th, 2018: At the same time, Russia in turn counter-attacks and introduces surcharges on US products. Customs duties for the import of the goods increase from 25% to 40%. These products mainly concern the field of road construction technology or instruments for metal processing.

5. July 10th, 2018: The Americans are announcing a new list of Chinese products whose customs duties will increase. In return, China warns that it will be forced to implement reprisals.

6. 19th July 2018: In the event of a US response, the European Union prepares a list of US products that may be taxed in the event of punitive customs duties on cars.

7. July 20th, 2018: Donald Trump is threatening China with a $500 billion tax on Chinese products. The American president incriminates the European Union and China to manipulate their currencies by lowering their interest rates.

8. 25th July 2018: Meeting between Donald Trump (USA) and Jean Claude Juncker (EU) to reach an agreement on trade.


10. August 3rd, 2018: China is responding by imposing new tariffs on imports of $60 billion worth of US products.

11. August 23rd, 2018: Donald Trump imposes an additional 25% duty on China on a new $16 billion tranche. China reacted quickly by also introducing 25% customs duties also targeting $16 billion of imported US products such as Harley Davidson motorcycles.

12. September 18th, 2018: The American president decides to tax $200 billion more in Chinese imports. This decision will be implemented on 24 September and taxes will initially be 10% and will increase to 25% as from 1st January 2019.

13. September 18th, 2018: China is responding to this announcement and is considering retaliatory measures. Beijing will impose tariffs on 60 billion dollars of American products.

14. 24th September 2018: The United States postpones by 90 days the customs duty increase announced on 18th September last. China, for its part, reduces customs duties on imports of American cars for 3 months but also on medicines or high-tech industries.

15. December 1st, 2018: Implementation of the draft law for foreign investors on "non-transfer of technology" and other guarantees to ease China's trade war. At the same time, a Huawei leader in Canada is arrested for circumventing sanctions against Iran.


2019

17. March 1st, 2019: Postponement of the 25% increase in customs duties for American imports.

18. May 5th, 2019: The United States reports a 25% increase in imports out of 200 billion.

19. May 10th, 2019: Negotiations in Washington to find a way out of this trade war. No agreement could be reached.

20. May 13th, 2019: China is increasing its tariffs on US products by $60 billion.

21. May 15th, 2019: The American President prohibits by decree to buy from foreign companies such as Huawei for American telecom networks.

22. May 19th, 2019: Google suspends its links with Chinese companies.

23. May 20th, 2019: The United States gives Huawei a 3-month stay to prepare his departure correctly in order to reassure American users.

24. May 29th, 2019: Donald Trump wants to rebalance trade between India and the United States. To this end, the American President suspends preferential trade treatment under India's Generalized System of Preference (GSP) programmed.

25. June 1st, 2019: Increase in customs duties on the $60 billion worth of US imports. China also announces the establishment of a blacklist of unreliable foreign companies.

26. June 16th, 2019: India is retaliating and increasing tariffs on about 30 American products such as nuts and apples.

27. June 17th, 2019: Following the American threat, Huawei suffered a sharp drop in sales abroad (by 40%), forcing it to reduce its production. We can say that in addition to being a trade war, it is also a technological war.

28. June 19th, 2019: Relaxation between China and the United States. The American President gave this information on Twitter to announce the easing of tensions with the Chinese President.

29. June 20th, 2019: Donald Trump accuses Mario Draghi, President of the European Central Bank, of manipulating exchange rates on Twitter.

30. June 24th, 2019: The United States announces the addition of 5 Chinese companies to its blacklist. These companies are no longer allowed to do business with American companies.

31. June 26th, 2019: Donald Trump is preparing new economic sanctions for Chinese exports for early July. In addition, the U.S. President has instructed the U.S. Department of Commerce to issue a decree that the United States would be the only arbitrator capable of judging whether monetary policy actions taken elsewhere in the world are harmful to U.S. interests. It is a new form of warfare that we call the World Currency Exchange Rates.
01er July 2019: Launch of a consultation to impose new taxes on the European Union.

04er July 2019: China announces that it will not sign any trade agreement with the United States if the latter does not include a full lifting of customs duties on Chinese products.

July 10er, 2019: Possibility of an investigation into the Gafa tax in France based on section 301 of 1974, which allows the American President to impose customs duties if a country's trade policy is considered harmful to American interests.

August 5er, 2019: Following Donald Trump's latest announcement to extend additional customs duties on almost all imports from China by 1st September 2019, the Chinese Yuan is falling sharply. Indeed, we have 7 yuan for one dollar now.

August 5er, 2019: The Paris Stock Exchange falls due to the depreciation of the Yuan against the Dollar.

August 6er, 2019: China suspends its purchases of American agricultural products. It also does not exclude the possibility of imposing additional customs duties on US products.

August 9er, 2019: Donald Trump said the United States is not ready to enter into a trade agreement with China. The tone is getting tougher between the two countries.

August 11er, 2019: China faces a new challenge after its Trade War with the United States. Indeed, Hong Kong's economy is being hit hard by pro-democracy demonstrations.

August 14er, 2019: President Donald Trump is easing pressure on China by delaying the imposition of punitive tariffs on a series of consumer products. In order to avoid any conflict, both countries have regained their language. Additional tariffs on Chinese electronic products are postponed to 15 December 2019 (instead of 1 September 2019).

August 16er, 2019: The American President wants to ease tensions with China and announces 'productive' discussions between the two countries.

August 23er, 2019: China is relaunching hostilities and announcing a new tax on $75 billion in imports from the United States. Donald Trump, furious, first ordered American companies to abandon the Chinese market and then announced a significant increase in taxes on Chinese imports.

August 24er, 2019: China informs the United States that it will raise tariffs in two stages. On September 1st and September 15th.

August 27er, 2019: That's all Donald Trump needs. The American President increases customs duties from 25% to 30% on 250 billion dollars of Chinese imports from October 1, 2019.

August 30er, 2019: It's a new school year for Americans. Indeed, the latter see the price of clothing and shoes rising as three-quarters are imported from China.

August 31er, 2019: Donald Trump confirms the entry into force of the new tariffs against imports from China as of 1 September 2019. This new surtax concerns $300 billion of Chinese imports. Almost all Chinese imports are concerned in the United States.

03er September 2019: China is filing a complaint against the US with the World Trade Organization (WTO) over customs duties on US imports.

05er September 2019: China announces negotiations with the United States in early October to maintain a dialogue. This Trade War is affecting the economies of many countries, so it is necessary to reach an agreement quickly.

September 11er, 2019: China announces the cancellation of customs surcharges on 16 categories of products imported from the United States. This decision comes just before the new negotiations with Donald Trump scheduled for October. Beijing's aim is to ease the pressure on Chinese industrialists and professionals.

13er September 2019: China exempts certain agricultural products imported from the United States, such as pork and soybeans, from the new customs surcharges. The hope is still to ease trade tensions before negotiations resume.

23er September 2019: China had proposed a meeting with the United States during the month of October for a concrete outcome of the negotiations, i.e., a signature on the new agreement between the two countries. The meeting is being prepared to discuss various important points of this trade war.

24er September 2019: The Universal Postal Union is meeting for an extraordinary Congress. Indeed, this is the third meeting since its creation in 1874 due in part to Donald Trump's announcement that the United States would withdraw from international mail exchanges. It is a kind of mini-Postal Brexit as a result of a trade war.

24er September 2019: US President Donald Trump is tough on China and warns that the time for "abuses" is over for trade and asks Beijing to protect "the democratic way of life".

26er September 2019: Following their meeting at the 74th UN General Assembly, Shinzo Abe and Donald Trump announced the first steps towards a trade agreement.

28er September 2019: Donald Trump reflects on the possibility of excluding Chinese companies listed on Wall Street. This measure is one of a series of measures being considered by the US administration to limit investment between the two countries.

03er October 2019: The United States will impose customs duties on certain products from the European Union from 18 October 2019 following the WTO agreement. The products concerned are:

- 25% off Irish and Scottish Whiskies.
- 10% of aircraft from France, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom.
- 25% on coffee and some German machines.
- 25% on cheeses, olive oil and frozen meat from the United Kingdom, Germany and Spain.
- 25% on pork products, butter from various countries.
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- **07th October 2019**: American and Chinese negotiators are expected to meet on Thursday, October 11, 2019. This is the 13th meeting between the United States and China since the beginning of the Trade War. This conflict has affected China; we have seen an economic slowdown that is constantly evolving.

- **08th October 2019**: Signing of a trade agreement between Japan and the United States based mainly on agriculture. Japan will reduce U.S. agricultural tariffs by $7 billion and vice versa for the United States.

- **October 11th, 2019**: The United States and China have taken a first step towards an agreement to settle the trade war. Donald Trump will suspend the increase that was planned for tariffs on $250 billion of Chinese imports and China, accepts concessions on intellectual property, financial services and the purchase of agricultural products.

- **October 16th, 2019**: Donald Trump will not sign any agreements with China until 16th November 2019. An agreement is being drafted but will only be signed after the APEC summit.

- **October 19th, 2019**: The United States began to implement punitive customs duties on Friday, October 18th, on 7.5 billion dollars of European products.

- **October 22nd, 2019**: China is seeking permission from the WTO (World Trade Organization) to impose tariffs on $2.4 billion worth of US goods to compensate for a 7-year trade dispute with the United States.

- **October 25th, 2019**: China wants to increase its trade with Brazil in order to offset the impact of the trade war on its economy.

- **October 26th, 2019**: China says trade negotiations with the United States are going well. Indeed, Phase 1 of the agreement is in the process of being finalized.

- **December 03rd, 2019**: The American President announced a new imposition of customs duties on steel and aluminum imports from Brazil and Argentina. Donald Trump justifies this imposition by the need to react to the devaluation of the currencies of these countries.

- **December 05th, 2019**: American and Chinese negotiators are in contact to reach a trade agreement despite the different tensions between the two countries.

- **December 08th, 2019**: Donald Trump blames the World Bank for lending money to China. For the American President, the middle empire does not need this money.

- **December 13th, 2019**: The United States suspends the additional tariffs that Donald Trump was going to put in place from Sunday, December 15th, 2019 on 160 billion dollars of Chinese products. This included laptops, telephones and clothing. This is the first agreement of Phase 1. This Phase 1 is based on the United States committing to lower tariffs as they are imposed and China is committed to increasing US imports in various sectors such as financial services or agriculture.

- **December 15th, 2019**: China announced that it decided to suspend the panned additional tariffs of either 10 percent or 5 percent on some US's products. It also pledged to continue the suspension of the additional tariffs on American-made vehicles and auto parts.

- **December 19th, 2019**: Following the decision of the United States to implement a new customs duty on imports of steel and aluminum, exports of US spirits to the European Union have fallen by 28%.

- **December 23rd, 2019**: China announces a decrease in tariffs on a large number of technological and food products. These cuts will be effective from January 1st and July 1st, 2020.

**2020**

- **January 02nd, 2020**: Due to the difficulties of the Trade War, China's manufacturing activity has been weak for the last 4 months.

- **January 03rd, 2020**: A first Phase 1 agreement is expected to be signed at the White House on January 15, 2020. This will be a first step for a reduction of some US taxes on imports of Chinese products. This is only the first step; we will see how it goes afterwards.

- **January 04th, 2020**: China has lifted a major restriction on foreign investment in the financial sector. This measure had been called for by the United States for some time. Now, foreign banks can establish branches in China and hold 100% of the capital (before it was no more than 49%) without being obliged to join forces with a local partner.

- **January 15th, 2020**: China and the United States have signed the Phase 1 agreement.

**Date Source**: https://www.bдор.fr/infos-or-investissement/guerre-commerciale, accessed the 04th November 2019.